



**Stuart Rumens suggests
that you try to make ghost
story**

This month's script is a half-hour horror tale in the style of Anglia TV's *Tales of the Unexpected*. As such, it has an unexpected twist at the end, but this will not be published in these pages. What follows is the storyline right up to the moment of the twist. If you want to make this movie, write to us at *Movie Maker*, and we'll send you a full dialogue script including the twist-ending. You can invent your own ending if you like, but if it is to be as good as the author's ending, it will naturally have to conform to everything that goes before it. Do keep the ending confidential. It is better that audiences discover it by watching the film rather than through the grape-vine.

The story is set in a small rural village, and the action centres on the village church.

IRRESOLUTE

It is Sunday morning. Rev. Timothy Oakes is the first to arrive at the

Who are you going to call? Bill Murray, Harold Ramis and Dan Aykroyd are collectively known as 'Ghostbusters'. Photo courtesy Columbia

GHOST STORY

church. Inside, he halts in the centre aisle and dips a knee to the altar. But now, instead of proceeding, he becomes irresolute, and stands looking anxiously all about. (Rev. Oakes is a warm, hearty man of 52, a good, devout priest, but also very much a man of the people. His congregations are not large, but his pastoral care reaches beyond the crumbling stone

walls into the heart of the community — into their homes, the local pub and every other aspect of village social life.) He pulls himself together and moves to the vestry door. There, he halts again, throwing a nervous glance up to the roof and listening intently.

GHOST STORY

The silence is broken by the heavy latch of the porch door; the organist, Geoffrey Turton is arriving. Oakes quickly disappears into the vestry. Turton follows him, and their muffled voices are heard in greetings and further pleasantries.

Janie now arrives. She is a gum-chewing tart with a heart of gold and a very fine pair of thighs. She is a member of the church choir, but she is less interested in redeeming her soul than making it with Geoffrey Turton.

MUSIC SHEETS

She clacks worldly heels purposefully up the aisle and greets the two men brightly as they emerge from the vestry. Oakes proceeds to change the hymn numbers on the display board, and Turton moves to the organ where he settles himself and thumbs through his music sheets. He raises a hand to the keyboard, but then hesitates and gazes up into the roof, straining his ears.

Geoffrey Turton is a mild, ingenuous bachelor of 30, heterosexual, but not actively so. He is more comfortable in the company of the old maids of the parish than with a thrusting seductress like Janie who now emerges from the vestry wearing a purple chorister's robe. Turton snatches his gaze down from the roof as she approaches him. She enters the choir stalls and takes a position next to the organ. Fixing Turton with a masticating leer, she tosses one leg over the other, revealing sheer black hose beneath the purple. Turton responds with a limp smile, and blunders into discord.

Outside, parishioners are now arriving, and the church and graveyard are viewed against the strains of a lusty hymn.

A STRANGE SOUND

The action cuts back to the church interior on the hymn's last line. Rev. Oakes mounts the Pulpit and begins his sermon. Presently, a strange sound issues from somewhere above. Oakes inwardly reacts, but outwardly ignores the intrusion, and continues. Turton shows a reaction but remains motionless.

The sound comes again, the sound of an unearthly bog — dripping, gurgling, churning. As the sermon continues, the camera explores congregation and choir, and their various reactions show that today is not their first experience of the phenomenon. The sound persists and strengthens, and the worshippers become visibly

agitated. Oakes curtails his sermon and announces the next hymn. Turton strikes up the organ, and the congregation rises and sings with fulsomeness intended more to drown the offending noise than to extol the glory of God.

In a village pub, a little later, Rev. Oakes is standing at the bar with Turton and Ted Pritchard, a sidesman. These three are huddled together in a confidential group. Their voices are not heard above the general lunchtime clamour. As their conversation continues, it is seen that they are being carefully watched by a young man sitting across the bar-room. It is Scott, a newspaper reporter aged 29. He watches for some time, then finishes his drink and leaves. The action now tightens on the vicar's group.

ANXIOUS

Scott, the reporter, is seen in the churchyard. He moves to the porch, casting glances over his shoulder as though anxious not to be seen.

Inside the church, the door is seen to open. Scott enters and the door swings shut behind him. He reacts to this, then moves to the centre aisle where he stops and gazes up to the roof, listening intently. There is no sound.

At the pub, dialogue reveals that Turton and Pritchard are urging the vicar to bring the matter to the attention of the Bishop. Oakes is reluctant to do so; he tries to reassure the others, though he cannot hide a grave anxiety in his face. Pritchard invites Oakes to take another half. The vicar declines, making some good-natured remark about moderation; then he excuses himself, and leaves.

A SHARP SOUND

In the church, Scott finds his way into the vestry where he examines a board on which hang the various church keys. Every hook is labelled in fading black ink, and every hook is occupied except the one marked Tower Door. Scott takes a small package from his pocket, and unwraps it to reveal a wad of putty. He takes the key to the North door from its hook, and makes an impression in the putty. Suddenly, he hears a sharp sound.

In the body of the church, Janie is striding loudly down the centre aisle, glancing upward as she goes.

Janie sweeps into the vestry, and takes a pink envelope from her handbag. She moves to the line of cassocks hanging on a rail, and is about to place the envelope in one of the cassocks when she stops and lets out a terrible scream. Scott has been

flushed from his hiding place among the robes.

INTERMITTENT

In the vicarage, the Rev. and Mrs Oakes are quietly taking lunch. In an intermittent and heavily one-sided duologue, Mrs Oakes gently urges her husband to take action. He responds with reluctant resignation to the fearful task ahead.

"You must stop it now, Timothy — before it's too late."

"I know, dear."

"You must get help this time — you can't face it on your own."

"I know."

Scott enters the pub with Janie. He settles her at a table, then moves to the bar. While he is buying drinks, the girl rises and goes to the Ladies' room. Scott brings a couple of drinks to the table, and sits. Janie has left her handbag on the seat. He opens the bag and takes out the pink envelope which he quickly discovers contains a pink and lusting letter of invitation to Geoffrey Turton. He replaces it in her bag as she returns. Pressing Turton at the bar, she gives him a meaningful glance... "Hello Geoffrey"... and swaggers to join Scott.

Depositing her chewing gum in the ash tray, she crosses her legs explicitly, and raises the Bacardi and Coke to her lips. Scott looks up from her thighs, and begins to talk to her about Rev. Oakes. He seems to know that Oakes left his last parish in mysterious circumstances, and he questions the girl obliquely on the subject. Deftly folding a fresh strip of gum into her mouth she explains that she doesn't know much about Oakes since she has only recently started going to church. But she wriggles up closer to Scott and says that she'd be ever so pleased to assist him. Scott realises that so far as his investigations are concerned, the girl is useless to him, and he lets his eyes fall back to her suspenders.

FUNERAL CARS

The next afternoon. Three hours before sunset. Funeral cars draw up outside the church. As the coffin is borne in, Scott's car arrives. Scott stops the car and turns off the engine. He watches as the mourners process into the church, then the scene falls still. Scott is allowing his eyes to float idly on the scene when, suddenly, he fixes a narrow, questioning gaze on the church tower — the church clock has stopped at half past eight. He checks his wristwatch, then lights a cigarette and settles in further wait.

Presently, a woman-mourner emerges from the church, distraught, half-staggering, her hand clasped to

her mouth. A man emerges and quickly follows the woman down the path. Scott stiffens; there is something in the woman's demeanour which suggests she is suffering something more than simple grief. She comes through the churchyard gate, closely pursued by the man, and they hurriedly pass Scott's car. Scott makes to get out of the car, but stops as the rest of the funeral party spill out of the church in some disarray. They huddle together in small groups, apparently disturbed. The vicar emerges and attempts to reassure them. Then the undertakers bring out the coffin, and Oakes draws the party away to the graveside. Scott gets out of the car and goes up the path. Unseen, he slips into the church.

ECHOING WAVES

Inside, the churning sound through the roof in intermittent, echoing waves. Scott moves all about, trying to pinpoint its source.

In the graveyard, the body has been laid to rest, and the mourners are hurrying to the cars. Oakes is left alone at the grave. He stands watching the last car departing, then turns his eyes to the church. A grimly determined expression rises in his face; he breaks away and strides to the church.

In the church, Scott ducks down behind a pew when the vicar enters, and watches secretly as Oakes moves to a cupboard beneath the tower, takes out a candle, and lights it. From his pocket, he takes a key, and lets himself into the tower.

GUTTERING

In the tower, Oakes mounts the spiral staircase, the candle guttering in the draught and tenuously lighting his anxious features.

Below, Scott approaches the tower door, grasps the latch and finds the door firmly locked from the other side.

In the tower, Oakes mounts the stairs and comes to the belfry door. He hesitates, catching his breath, then pushes the door slowly open. The gurgling sound rises to a climax, and a pulsing, flickering light falls on his face.

Below, Scott is stepping away from the tower door when he halts and stoops to examine a dark red stain on the stone floor. As he does so, the churning sound stops, causing him to straighten and look up and all around. After a moment, he stirs and moves to the porch door.

HALF-WITTED

Outside, the grave-digger, Bonny Angel, is at work filling in the grave. Scott comes out of the church and, catching sight of Bonny, stops and gives him a friendly nod. Bonny responds with a half-witted, broken-toothed grin, and heaves in another shovelful. Scott moves to the base of the tower and gazes up. There is no

visible sign of irregularity except the clock, still stuck at eight-thirty. He moves to his car and drives off.

As he does so, Pritchard, sidesman and village electrician, drives up in his van. Carrying a toolbox, he walks up the church path, and is greeted by Bonny who has settled himself against a headstone and is boiling a kettle on a small stove. He invites Pritchard to join him in a mug of a tea. Pritchard accepts, but says that first he must set the clock in motion, assuring Bonny that it will only take a moment, and that he will join him presently. Pritchard is a jolly, rustic character, and he strides into the church with a hearty whistle on his lips.

In the church, Pritchard moves to the tower door, and taking a key from his pocket, he inserts it in the lock.

In the village shop where she works as an assistant, Janie is sitting behind the counter chewing gum and filing her fingernails. Scott enters the shop.

In the tower, Pritchard, still whistling, is mounting the staircase.

In the graveyard, Bonny is enjoying his tea, and he looks up to the tower several times in expectation of Pritchard joining him.

In the shop, Scott is speaking confidentially to Janie; urging her to obtain a key to the tower door. She promises to do her best, and agrees to meet him at the pub as soon as she has finished work.

UNTOUCHED

Bonny, still expecting Pritchard to appear, now places a lid on Pritchard's tea mug to keep it warm and goes back to his work. **TIME LAPSE:** Dusk falls. Bonny has completed the job and is packing up his tools. Pritchard's mug is still untouched. Bonny ditches the contents and stows the mug in his bag; then he moves to the church and enters.

In the church, Bonny goes straight to the tower door and, finding it open, calls up the staircase to Pritchard. There is no reply. Calling again, he steps inside and mounts the staircase. On the clock room landing, he becomes apprehensive, and calls out again, thinly. He senses a foreign presence as he shuffles nervously to the door and puts his ear to it. Knocking apologetically, he calls again: "Are you in there, Mr Pritchard?" Bonny peers in as the door swings slowly open, and a look of horror engulfs him.

SOME EXCUSE

At the pub Scott is taking an early evening drink while waiting for Janie. The girl arrives and explains that the spare tower key is held by Mr Pritchard the electrician. Scott says that they must go to Pritchard and make some excuse for borrowing the key.

At the Pritchard front door, they discover that he's not at home. Mrs Pritchard explains that he went to the church hours ago the mend the clock, and hasn't come home. She is

very worried in case there's been an accident, and she explains that she has been phoning around to see if he husband can be found.

Scott and Janie draw up outside the church. It is now dark, and Scott brings a flashlight out from the car. The couple regard Pritchard's van for a moment, then move quickly up the church path.

UNEARTHLY

In the church, Scott turns on the flashlight, and urges Janie not to switch on the church lights in case they draw attention from outside. The church is silent; but then an unearthly laughter issues from above, and echoes all around. Janie is terrified and wants to escape, but Scott moves to the tower, and she is compelled to follow him for comfort of his contact.

Beneath the tower, Scott shines the flashlight all about and finds the pool of dark liquid on the floor. Raising the light to the ceiling, he gazes up. Janie looks up also, and as she does so, a dribble of fluid, bright and red, spatters on her stricken face. She lets out a scream and turns to flee; but then screams again as she runs into the arms of the village policeman.

PC Cox begins to question the couple, but has not proceeded very far when Turton enters. And Turton is able to stammer out only a few words before the echoing laughter issues again. All eyes turn upward; and then echoing footsteps are heard — heavy, dragging footsteps — descending the tower stairs. Everybody backs away from the tower door, and stands motionless as the footfalls continue to descend. At the bottom, they stop, and Scott trains the flashlight on the door. The door slowly opens.

"Mr Pritchard!" exclaims Janie. Pritchard stands in the doorway, deathly pale, his eyes glazed, his mouth slack and dribbling. He raises his eyes to the roof as if attempting to explain, then falls forward onto the floor. The others rush forward, and PC Cox tells Janie to look after Pritchard. Scott makes to enter the tower, but Cox checks him. "I'll go first, sir, if you don't mind." With that, another chilling peal of laughter issues from above. Cox stops in his tracks and turns to Scott. "Perhaps you could go first, sir, seeing as how you're the one with the light."

In the tower, the three men mount the stairs leaving Janie behind to attend to Pritchard. They ascend against swelling sounds of gurgling and dripping. The clock room door comes into view, and they pause to catch their breath. Then, fixing their unblinking gaze down the beam of Scott's flashlight, they approach the door...

Do you think that you can finish this story? If you have any wonderful ideas for an ending, send them to us at *Movie Maker*, No. 1 Golden Square, London W1R 3AB. ■